

Transgender Bathroom Rights

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Lesson: Transgender Bathroom Rights

Rationale for the Lesson: In May 2016, the Obama administration publicized the policy that protects transgender students who use the bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identities. Transgender students were given these rights as denying them was considered a form of gender discrimination. On January 22, the Trump administration rescinded that policy. Many people have had strong feelings about this topic for the past few years due to the increase in transgender visibility. Many people were not aware of the policy until it was taken away. People who support transgender bathroom rights and people who are against them are all concerned with the safety of students. People who do not care about the issue also are not aware of how this affects transgender students outside of bathrooms. Many people today still do not understand what it means to be transgender. This lesson plan will inform students about how these policies affect transgender students and how transgender bathroom rights affect all students.

Standards:

- Common Core Standards
 - RH.9-10.3: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
 - RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
 - RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Essential Question/Guiding Question:

What does it mean to be transgender? Why is there a debate over which bathroom transgender students use at school? What is the best way to support transgender youth in public schools?

Objectives:

Students will understand what it means to be transgender, why there's a debate over which bathrooms transgender students use at schools, and how to support transgender students.

Step 1: Write the terms “sex”, “gender”, “orientation”, “transgender”, and “cisgender” on the board. Have students write what they think the definitions are on a piece of scrap paper. After three minutes, go over the answers with the students and define the terms on the board. Draw the “Genderbread Person”.

Sex: The biological traits of a person such as organs, hormones, and chromosomes.

Gender: What a person identifies as.

Orientation: Who people are attracted to in relation to their own identity.

Transgender: A person whose gender identity does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth (5 minutes).

Step 2: Show the video of Jacob to introduce students to a five-year-old transgender child (6 minutes).

Step 3: Briefly explain how transgender bathroom rights have changed over the years. First explain how the Obama-era policy allowed transgender students to use bathrooms that aligned with their gender identities due to nondiscrimination laws. Then explain how the Trump administration rescinded that policy as Education Secretary Betsy DeVos was forced to sign off on the policy despite being worried about the safety of transgender students (1 minute).

Step 4: Show the video that explains the policy and how it was rescinded. Have students draw a column and write down differences between the transgender bathroom policy during the Obama administration and the Trump administration while watching the video. Have the students explain the logic and the consequences of the policies. Explain how this issue is more about the federal government backing away from supporting LGBTQ rights (5 minutes).

Step 5: Inform students about the timeline regarding transgender bathroom rights. Discuss why it was in place originally and why it was taken away (5 minutes).

Step 6: Present PowerPoint addressing stigmas against trans community regarding this issue. The main source for this will be the FAQ from lambdalegal.org. New terms will be introduced such as “passing” and defined while presenting. Students will answer questions on a handout with questions from the presentation and have two minutes to answer each question in groups. If they disagree on answers, they can divide the answers as long as they prepare answers for each side. The answers will be discussed on each slide after each group has had time to answer (20 minutes).

Lesson Closure: Short activity asking students what three things they can do to support trans rights, especially bathroom rights. Hand out list of resources and items from GLSEN. Answer any questions that the students have (5 minutes).

Material/equipment needed: Paper, pencil, projector screen.

Assignment: Students will have an interactive experience when learning the LGBTQ terms and will answer questions in response to the videos and the presentation.

Assessment: I will compare what the students have answered at first to the answers to their last questions to see if they understand how restrooms affect the transgender community.

Modifications for diverse learners: Students will work in groups to answer the powerpoint questions, the video questions, and the questions I ask. The powerpoint will help visual and audio learners along with the video. The Genderbread Person is also a visual aid to help understand gender and orientation. All the questions that the students will be asked involve working in groups.

Annotated Bibliography

Davis, Bob. "Transgender Activism at City College of San Francisco." GenderWatch [ProQuest]. N.p., 2006. Web.

A group called the Transgender Working Group pushed for gender-inclusive bathrooms at the City College of San Francisco. Educating staff and students about the T in LGBTQ leads to acceptance. Students have successfully spread awareness about the transgender community at the City College of San Francisco. They were ahead of their time as this article was published in 2006. Their first objective was educating about gender identity and making the campus more inclusive regarding that topic. They also worked on accommodating showers and restrooms for transgender people. Many activists pushed for gender-neutral bathrooms on college campuses, which are more common today. They also worked on reducing harassment from faculty, which involved instructors refusing to use the correct pronouns and saying personal information out loud. This is a success story that has worked in the past and can definitely be a model for the present.

"FAQ: Answers to Some Common Questions about Equal Access to Public Restrooms." Lambda Legal. Lambda Legal, n.d. Web. 19 Feb. 2017.

This page answers many common questions about why transgender students should be permitted to use the restrooms that match their identities. If transgender students use the bathrooms that align with their identities, their health, well-being, and education benefit. The denial of access to a bathroom that matches a transgender student's identity is a form of discrimination. It also affects the safety of the student. There is no evidence that cisgender people would be harmed if transgender students have bathroom rights but there is evidence that transgender students would be safer. Transgender students who have not physically transitioned should have the right to use the bathroom that aligns with their identities as physical appearance is not a factor for cisgender individuals. Additionally, using surgery as a determining factor for which bathroom a person should use is an invasion of privacy because it requires the disclosure of personal medical information. Transgender bathroom rights benefit the health and education of transgender students and only affect the safety of students in a positive way.

Gibson, Michelle A., Jonathan F. Alexander, and Deborah T. Meem. Finding Out: An Introduction to LGBTQ Studies. 2nd ed. N.p.: SAGE Publications, 2013. Print.

This resource will help students understand more about the transgender community. Students will have a background about the transgender community which will help them understand the issue of transgender bathroom rights. This book explains how identity goes beyond clothing and explains exactly what gender and sex are for students who do not understand the difference.

Killermann, Sam. "The Genderbread Person." *It's Pronounced Metrosexual*. Sam Killermann, *It's Pronounced Metrosexual*, n.d. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.

The Genderbread Person has been used in multiple presentations in GLSEN and the Speak Summit. It is a drawing of a gingerbread person that helps students understand the differences between sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression. Students will be able to memorize the differences with a visual aid. It also includes images of the spectrums of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression.

"Life as a 5-Year-Old Transgender Child." *YouTube*, uploaded by NBC News, 22 April 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVmau1cM5TU>.

This is a video of a five-year-old transgender child. The viewer can understand a transgender child's perspective and the family of a transgender child's perspective by watching this video. This helps viewers understand how being transgender is not a choice and how the mental health of a transgender child can be positively affected by supportive parents. This also shows how children the same age as the child treat the child.

Peters, Jeremy W., Jo Becker, and Julie Hirschfield Davis. "Trump Rescinds Rules on Bathrooms for Transgender Students." *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, 22 Feb. 2017. Web. 26 Feb. 2017.

Trump rescinded the policy that protects transgender students' rights to use the bathrooms that align with their identities. Schools are no longer required to allow transgender students to use the restrooms that match their identities. There were disagreements about this issue in the Trump administration before the policy was rescinded. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos did not want the policy rescinded because she was worried about the safety of transgender students. Attorney General Jeff Sessions tried getting DeVos to change her mind because her approval was required in order to move forward with removal of transgender bathroom rights in public schools. She was then confronted by Trump who implied that her only options were resigning or defying the president if she did not approve of rescinding the policy.

This has been an issue for LGBTQ rights and many LGBTQ rights supporters have protested this.

"Trans and Gender Nonconforming Student Resources." GLSEN. GLSEN, Inc, n.d. Web. 19 Feb. 2017.

This features resources for both students and educators. The student resources include information on the trans community, information for trans students, and information on the Transgender Day of Remembrance. These resources can help students make gay-straight alliances more inclusive. They also help trans students know their rights and help students who are not a part of the trans community become better allies. The educator resources include information on educating elementary schools about the trans community, how to support trans students, and LGBTQ history. There are also research resources which include GLSEN's school climate survey and the benefits of an inclusive environment for trans students. Most of these resources come from the perspective of the trans community.

Transgender Bathroom Rights: Common Questions

1. Which bathrooms should transgender students use?
2. Does a transgender person have to look a certain way to use a certain bathroom?
3. Do transgender people need to have gender-affirming surgery (SRS) to use the bathrooms that align with their identities?
4. How do unisex bathrooms affect women's safety?
5. Why can't transgender people just use unisex bathrooms?
6. How should teachers react if a cisgender student has a problem sharing a problem with a transgender student?

7. What can transgender students do if they are facing harassment for the bathrooms they are using?

http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Jump%20Start%20Guide%20Part%207_1.pdf
(GLSEN Jump Start Guide, 27 pages, only print out a few copies)

http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/trans%20heroes_0.pdf
(Trans Day of Remembrance Handout)

http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/be%20an%20ally_0.pdf
(Ally Handout)

